MARVEL
PSR 47

BEDARD

SAKAKIBARA

# EXILES®

## EARN YOUR WINGS 2 OF 3

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Part Two of Three

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"THE LAST TIME WE MET, REED RICHARDS... I KILLED YOU."

...SO, AS YOU MIGHT IMAGINE, SEEING YOU *AGAIN* LIKE THIS IS... *BITTERSWEET.*

EVEN IF YOU *ARE* MERELY AN *ALTERNATE-REALITY* VERSION OF THE HERO I FELLED FORTY YEARS AGO.

WE ARE WASTING *VALUABLE TIME,* RICHARDS.

THIS WOMAN-- THIS *ABOMINATION*-- ARRIVED WITH *OTHERS* FROM ALTERNATE EARTHS WHO WISH TO SABOTAGE OUR FUTURE--OUR VERY *DESTINY!*

WE SHOULD BE *HUNTING DOWN* THESE SO-CALLED *"EXILES."*

I *KNOW* THAT, PRINCE NAMOR. BUT FIRST WE NEED A *STRATEGY,* AND FOR THAT WE MUST KNOW WHAT WE'RE *UP AGAINST.*

SO... *NAMORA,* IS IT?

WHEN YOU FIRST ARRIVED, YOU REQUESTED MY *HELP.* HOW CAN I RECONCILE THAT WITH YOUR CLAIM THAT YOU *MURDERED* ME IN ANOTHER LIFE?

IT WAS NOT *"MURDER,"* REED RICHARDS. BUT I SHOULD START FROM THE *BEGINNING* IF YOU ARE TO FULLY UNDER-STAND...

"AS A GIRL, I OFTEN STOLE AWAY TO EXPLORE THE REEF ALONE, HEEDLESS OF THE *DANGER.*

"LIKE *ALL* CHILDREN, I BEHAVED LIKE I WAS *INDESTRUCTIBLE...*

"...BUT IN *MY* CASE IT TURNED OUT TO BE *TRUE*--AT LEAST SO FAR AS THE *SHARK* WAS CONCERNED.

"WE HAD NO *WORD* FOR IT AT THE TIME, BUT I WAS THE FIRST *MUTANT* BORN TO THE PEOPLE OF PROUD ATLANTIS..."

"EIGHT YEARS PASSED BEFORE WE LEARNED THAT ATLANTIS HARBORED *ANOTHER* MUTANT.

"HIS NAME WAS *ATTUMA*.

"HE BELIEVED HIS PRETERNATURAL MIGHT WAS A MANDATE FROM THE GODS TO TAKE THE CORAL THRONE FROM OUR BELOVED *QUEEN DORMA*.

"UNFORTUNATELY, I ARRIVED TOO LATE TO STOP HIM FROM *SLAYING* THE GREAT LADY.

"HE WAS *TEN TIMES* STRONGER THAN THE FIERCEST SOLDIER IN THE REALM.

"HE *LAUGHED* THAT A WOMAN WOULD FACE HIM IN SINGLE COMBAT WHEN ALL OTHERS FLED BEFORE HIM."

"THE LAUGHTER DIED IN HIS THROAT WHEN HE REALIZED THAT I WAS *TWICE* AS STRONG AS *HE*.

"WHEN IT WAS OVER, THE GREATEST THREAT IN THE HISTORY OF ATLANTIS LAY *DEAD*, AND A GRATEFUL PEOPLE HAILED ME AS THEIR *HERO*.

"THE QUEEN HAD DIED WITHOUT AN *HEIR*, AND ATTUMA SLEW THOSE WHO MIGHT NATURALLY REPLACE HER.

"THE PEOPLE CLAMORED FOR THEIR *SAVIOR* TO ASSUME THE CORAL THRONE.

WHO WAS I TO *DENY* THEM?"

"FOR *DECADES* ATLANTIS REMAINED AT PEACE, OWING TO MY STRICT EDICT *FORBIDDING* CONTACT WITH THE VIOLENT SURFACE WORLD.

"ALAS, THE *AIR-BREATHERS* INCREASINGLY ENCROACHED UPON MY DOMAIN.

"TWO GLOBAL WARS AND SOME APPALLING *TESTS* IN THE PACIFIC CONFIRMED THAT THEY WERE A THREAT TO *ALL LIFE* ON EARTH.

"I RESOLVED TO END OUR ISOLATION AND *INTRODUCE* MYSELF TO THOSE ABOVE WITH A *PREEMPTIVE* STRIKE.

"IMAGINE MY *SURPRISE* WHEN A SURFACE-WORLDER INTRODUCED HIMSELF *FIRST!*

"HIS NAME WAS *CHARLES XAVIER*, AND HIS METHOD OF CONTACT WAS *STARTLING*, TO SAY THE LEAST!

"I MIGHT HAVE *RESENTED* THE PSYCHIC INTRUSION, BUT FOR THE *COMPASSION* I SENSED AS OUR MINDS TOUCHED.

"MY INVASION WOULD *WAIT* UNTIL HE HAD HIS SAY."

"XAVIER BECAME ONE OF MY *FEW* PERSONAL FRIENDS--A FELLOW MUTANT AND A RARE *EQUAL* IN POWER AND INTELLECT.

"HIS SINGULAR VISION FILLED ME WITH *HOPE* THAT THOSE ABOVE THE WAVES MIGHT *OUTGROW* THEIR DANGEROUS AGGRESSION.

"ALL OF THAT WAS *RUINED* WHEN MAGNETO ATTACKED AN AIR FORCE BASE AND CRYSTALLIZED HUMANITY'S *FEAR* OF MUTANTS.

"WE STOPPED THE VILLAIN, BUT THE *PICTURES* MADE HEADLINES AND HARDENED HEARTS AROUND THE WORLD.

"THOUGH I COUNSELED *RESISTANCE*, XAVIER SURRENDERED LIKE A SHEEP TO THE SLAUGHTER, *TRUSTING* A CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM THAT SHUT HIM AWAY FOREVER.

"WITHIN MONTHS, ANY MUTANT WHO HAD NOT VOLUNTARILY SURRENDERED WAS *HUNTED* BY THE MILITARY AND GOVERNMENT-SANCTIONED 'HEROES' SUCH AS *THE AVENGERS*.

"THERE WAS ONE NOTABLE EXCEPTION--A *TRUE* HERO WHO SPOKE OUT FEARLESSLY *AGAINST* THE RISING TIDE OF ANTI-MUTANT HYSTERIA..."

...IF ONLY THEY HAD LISTENED TO *YOU*, REED RICHARDS, THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN MUCH LESS *BLOOD* ON MY HANDS, IN THE END.

NOW, *WHO* EXACTLY ARE WE SUPPOSED TO LOOK OUT FOR, BEN?

STRETCHO DIDN'T *SAY* WHO, JUST THAT THERE'S *FIVE* OF 'EM COMIN'.

YOU WERE *THERE* WHEN HE SAID IT, ZIPPO-HEAD... *REMEMBER?*

GUESS I WAS A LITTLE *DISTRACTED* BY REED'S NEW *GUEST*.

I MEAN...*DANG!* IF I'VE GOT THE HOTS FOR A *CHICK*-VERSION OF *NAMOR*, DOES THAT MAKE *ME*... Y'KNOW...?

HOLY MOTHER'A *PEARL--!*

DROP THE *METROSEXUAL* MALARKEY AN' HELP ME CHECK THE *REST*'A THE PERIMETER, WOULDJA...?

BLLLIINNNK

LOOK--THE *BAXTER BUILDING*--HEADQUARTERS OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR.

THE *TALLUS* SAID NAMORA IS BEING HELD INSIDE, BUT IT DIDN'T SAY EXACTLY *WHERE*.

YOU'RE RIGHT, BLINK. SO HOW DO WE GET HER *OUT* WITHOUT STARTING A *SMALL WAR*?

WE'LL NEED TO DO SOME *RECON*, NOCTURNE. MAYBE YOU CAN *POSSESS* ONE OF THE JANITORIAL STAFF AND HAVE A LOOK AROUND...

OR MAYBE I COULD--

TAKE *ME* WITH YOU, T.J.! I PROMISE TO KEEP IT *CLEAN*! JUST GRASP MY HANDLE *FIRMLY*, AND--

QUIET, MORPH.

WHAT ABOUT THE *ORIGINAL* MISSION THE TALLUS GAVE US WHEN WE FIRST GOT HERE?

IF WE *COMPLETE* IT, WON'T WE *AND* NAMORA JUST BLINK *OFF* TO THE *NEXT* SCREWED-UP REALITY?

MAKES MORE SENSE THAN ATTACKING THE F.F. AND NAMOR...

-MMMF!-

YES...IT DOES, HEATHER.

BUT UNFORTUNATELY, OUR MISSION IS STILL A RIDDLE-- "LEAVE YOUR POSSESSIONS, AND EARN YOUR WINGS."

UM, CAN I PLEASE JUST SAY SOMETHING?

Y'KNOW, THEY TEACH A WHOLE CLASS AT XAVIER'S ABOUT THE FANTASTIC FOUR.

THAT STRETCHY GUY--MR. FANTASTIC-- IS SUPPOSED TO BE REAL SMART. YOU WOULD THINK HE'D RATHER TALK THAN FIGHT...

...I COULD GIVE HIM A MESSAGE FROM YOU. I MEAN, NOBODY IS EVER SCARED OF ME.

I COULD ASK THEM TO LET YOUR FRIEND GO, OR JUST TELL THEM NOT TO BE AFRAID OF YOU.

LISTEN, BEAK-BOY--

BEAK.

WHATEVER. NO OFFENSE, BUT WE ONLY BROUGHT YOU ALONG SO YOU WOULDN'T TELL THE X-MEN WHAT WE'RE DOING.

DON'T WORRY-- WE'LL TAKE YOU BACK HOME AS SOON AS WE'RE DONE.

UNTIL THEN, WE'D APPRECIATE IT IF YOU'D JUST KEEP YOUR HEAD LOW AND YOUR COMMENTS TO YOURSELF.

WAIT A MINUTE, CAL... YOU KNOW...

"...THAT ACTUALLY WASN'T SUCH A BAD IDEA."

NAMOR'S RIGHT, REED. YOU'RE WASTING TIME LISTENING TO THIS WOMAN'S *HOGWASH.*

*SUSAN...?*

SHE CAN'T EVEN KEEP HER *STORY* STRAIGHT-- SAYING SHE *KILLED* YOU, THEN ACTING LIKE YOUR LONG-LOST *FRIEND*...

...AND THE WHOLE TIME MAKING *EYES* AT YOU, LIKE...LIKE THE *CATFISH* WHO ATE THE *CANARY!*

ARE YOU CALLING ME A *LIAR*, SUSAN RICHARDS?

WELL, FOR STARTERS THE *TIMEFRAME* FOR YOUR LIFE STORY DOESN'T *ADD UP.*

YOU SAID YOU RULED ATLANTIS FOR *DECADES* BEFORE MEETING XAVIER *FORTY YEARS* AGO!

JUST HOW *OLD* ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO *BE?!*

MY, MY. I'D NEVER EXPECT SUCH INSOLENCE FROM THE *INVISIBLE GIRL.*

INVISIBLE *WOMAN.*

INDEED.

ON THE QUESTION OF AGE, SUSAN RICHARDS, I AM *ONE HUNDRED AND FOUR* YEARS OLD. MUTATION HAS BEEN MOST *KIND* TO ME.

AS FOR MY *HISTORY* WITH YOUR HUSBAND...

"...ONCE HIS OBJECTIONS WERE OVERRULED BY THE HUMAN GOVERNMENTS, I COULD THINK OF ONLY ONE *SANE* ANSWER TO THE ANTI-MUTANT *MADNESS*.

"I PRAYED XAVIER WOULD ONE DAY FORGIVE ME, AND SET ABOUT DESTROYING THE *IRON FIST* OF OUR OPPRESSORS--THE "*SUPER HEROES*".

"WHO CAN SAY WHAT *GOOD* THESE MARVELS MIGHT HAVE ACCOMPLISHED HAD I NOT BEEN *FORCED* TO EXPUNGE THEM?

"ALL I KNOW FOR CERTAIN IS THAT THEY DIED WITH *HONOR*.

"MY *BIGGEST* CHALLENGE WAS THE *FANTASTIC FOUR*.

"THE *IRONY* WAS NOT LOST ON ME--REED RICHARDS, WHO HAD ONCE CHAMPIONED XAVIER'S CAUSE, WAS NOW MY MOST IMPLACABLE *ENEMY*.

"HE *RALLIED* THE HUMAN FORCES IN THE SAHARA, DEVISED *STRATEGIES* TO HALT MY ARMIES, AND *COORDINATED* HIS COHORTS MOST EFFECTIVELY AGAINST ME."

BUT YOUR GREATEST STRENGTH WAS ALSO YOUR FATAL FLAW--YOU WERE A *FAMILY.*

I LURED THE IMPETUOUS *HUMAN TORCH* AND *THE THING* TO THE DEPTHS OF THE MARIANAS TRENCH, KNOWING YOU TWO WOULD *HAVE* TO FOLLOW.

THE CRUSHING PRESSURE AND DARKNESS TIPPED THE SCALES IN MY FAVOR, AND I FINALLY REMOVED THE *LAST* OBSTACLE TO MY PAX ATLANTICA.

THE WORLD TRULY *DID* BECOME A BETTER PLACE UNDER MY RULE, BUT IT WAS UNSPEAKABLY *TRAGIC* THAT SO MANY HAD TO DIE...

...AND I *CHERISH* THAT LAST BATTLE AS *MY FINEST HOUR...*

BEEP BEEP

YES?

DOCTOR RICHARDS? SORRY FOR THE INTERRUPTION, BUT YOU HAVE AN AFTER-HOURS VISITOR DOWN HERE. HE SAYS YOU'RE EXPECTING HIM?

HE SAYS HE'S WITH A GROUP CALLED "THE EXILES"...?

IT'S BEEN TWENTY MINUTES...

MAYBE BEAK TOOK THE VISITOR'S TOUR.

I HEAR THEY'VE GOT A WAY-COOL TROPHY ROOM WITH THE SILVER SURFER'S SKATEBOARD AND DOCTOR DOOM'S NUCLEAR SHOEHORN...

THIS WAS A VERY BAD MOVE. BY SENDING THAT KID IN THERE, WE MAY HAVE BLOWN OUR BEST CHANCE TO END THIS QUICKLY AND CLEANLY.

IT WAS MY CALL, CALVIN. IF I'M GOING TO LEAD THIS TEAM AGAIN, I CAN'T HAVE YOU SECOND-GUESSING ME.

YEAH, WHAT HAPPENED TO THE NEW GIVE-PEACE-A-CHANCE MIMIC?

THAT'S JUST IT-- THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE MIGHT'VE BEEN WHAT WE NEEDED TO END THIS QUICKLY

ELEMENT'A SURPRISE, HUH?

NOW WHAT WOULDJA BE NEEDIN' THAT FOR?

OKAY, LET'S ALL JUST KEEP CALM HERE, BECAUSE THIS ISN'T WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE--

SAVE YOUR BREATH, PAL! WE WERE WARNED ABOUT YOU!

-URK-

WHAT HAS NAMORA BEEN TELLING YOU?!

SHE TOLD US ENOUGH! SHE SAID YOU'D SCREW UP OUR WHOLE TIMELINE OR SOMETHING--!

WHOA--!

CUTE TRICK WITH THE STEEL SKIN.

I'M GOIN' OUT ON A LIMB HERE, AND GUESSIN' YOU CAN TAKE A PUNCH.

Y-YES, BUT--

POW

I'LL GET *MIMIC!* TRY TO KEEP IT CONFINED TO THIS *ROOFTOP!*

YOU JUST BLEW YOUR *LAST CHANCE* FOR A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT!

WHAT'RE YOU, LITTLE LADY... HIS *LAWYER?*

BLINK

!

*SOMETHING* LIKE THAT..

CHECK WITH CYCLOPS, YOU DON'T BELIEVE MY SCHOOL I.D., BUT I AM TELLING YOU--

--THESE EXILE PEOPLE ARE NOT HERE TO HURT ANYBODY!

RICHARDS, TELL ME YOU AREN'T GOING TO STAKE OUR FUTURES ON THE WORD OF THIS FEATHERED CHILD--?!

PERHAPS IF YOU HAD NOT FORCED ME TO IMPRISON NAMORA THE MOMENT I MET HER, WE COULD HAVE RESOLVED THIS ENTIRE MATTER BY NOW, NAMOR.

I AM GOING TO MEET THE EXILES IN THE FOREST UPSTATE--SAFELY AWAY FROM THE CITY, AND WE CAN ALL DISCUSS HOW TO RELEASE YOU FROM YOUR SERVITUDE TO THIS "TIMEBROKER" ENTITY YOU MENTIONED.

THANK YOU, REED RICHARDS. I WOULD EXPECT NO LESS FROM YOU.

UNLIKE IN HER WORLD, COOLER HEADS WILL PREVAIL IN OURS.

JUST DON'T EXPECT ME TO TAKE HER SHOPPING...OR LEAVE YOU TWO ALONE TOGETHER...

BEN! JOHNNY! COULD YOU COME INSIDE FOR A MOMENT?

KLK

KYOOM

=WHLING=

OH, NO!

KROOM

YOU COULDN'T JUST LISTEN, COULD YOU?!

POP

UNHAND THE THING, FOUL BEAST!

UH-UH. NO WAY AM I LETTIN' THAT SISSY IN A SPEEDO SAVE MY HASH...!

NONE BUT *NAMOR* SHALL DECIDE HIS DESTINY!

*FOOL!* WOULD YOU SNATCH *DEFEAT* FROM THE JAWS OF *VICTORY?!*

LORD HELP US IF *THOR* SHOWS UP AND STARTS RUNNING *HIS* YAP--!

KHAK

YOU HAVE *MOCKED* THE AVENGING SON FOR THE *LAST TIME!*

*SUSAN!* WHERE ARE-- EH?

BLINNNK

MISTER FANTASTIC!

NOW, HOLD ON...

REED! GET AWAY FROM THEM!!

FWOOSH

FWOOSH

FWOOSH

JOHNNY, WAIT--!

RRRAWWKKK--! IT'S ALL MY FAULT!

...=UNH=... OHHH...

IF ONLY I'D CONVINCED THEM FASTER--!

TO BE CONTINUED...